

Some thoughts on discipleship

“Follow me.” → Matthew 4:18-22

Matthew 4:18-22 ESV 18While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. 19And he said to them, **“Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”** 20Immediately they left their nets and followed him.

21And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. 22Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

- **Jim Bontrager** - I immediately began learning about Scripture, prayer, obedience, friendship evangelism, apologetics, marriage, family, faith, finance, forgiveness, etc from Jim.
- **My non-Christian Friends** - I immediately began telling them everything I was learning about God.

1.) **No matter where you are on the journey, keep learning from others.**

2.) **No matter where you are on the journey, keep teaching others.**

- **It's Fall, which is the start of the educational calendar.** We are starting fresh with Sunday school and kids church. I am starting a ministry school experience.
- **Rabbi** - a mentor/teacher/master by whom a learner is apprenticed in a field-specific body of tradecraft and accumulated knowledge.
- **Peripatetic or “Walking” School** - to be a disciple meant literally to follow Jesus, even physically, because his teachings were never restricted to a classroom. This way of talking about learning teachings as walking was picked up by the apostle Paul in several places. Here's one:

Ephesians 4:1 ESV "I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called"

- **Disciple** - used 233 times in the gospels to talk about Jesus' followers. “Christian” is used only 3 times in the entire NT. My point is that this is the dominant concept of what it is to call Jesus "Lord." A disciple is a "learner" who is walking with Jesus as Rabbi, learning from him by example and word, how to follow his example and word, and at the same time is teaching others by example and word.
- **Mission statement:** Gateway Fellowship's mission is to **be disciples** of Jesus, and to **make disciples** of Jesus. It's so central we made it our web address. www.bedisciples.com
- **This is how people used to learn everything before the advent of the modern educational institution.** Every baker, smithy, barber, Miller, tailor, farmer, or whatever else always learned by “on the job training.” The good news is that on the job training -- learning by watching, and learning by doing -- is exactly what we mean by the word “discipleship.”

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- 2.) **No matter where you are on the journey, keep teaching others.**

Matthew 28:20 “and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you...”

- if it just said, “and teaching them everything I have said.” Western classroom education would be enough.
- but it says, “teaching them TO OBEY everything I have commanded you.” That means it requires TRAINING, and involves life on life relationships.
- INFORMATION vs FORMATION

1 Corinthians 11:1 NIV Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

- **The Protege Effect:** “Students enlisted to tutor other work harder to understand the material, recall it more accurately, and apply it more effectively.” --Annie Murphy Paul
- **Reciprocity** - reciprocity is sharing things for mutual benefit. The gaps in our skills and understanding become far more obvious to us when we try to teach someone else a thing. The learning process goes both ways!
- **Cascading discipleship:** By "cascade" I mean a process whereby knowledge is successively passed on. In a congregation this looks like each developing stage of believers teaching the groups coming up behind them so that everyone is mentored, and everyone mentors.

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The Mentoring cycle

1. Model the skill: I do, you watch, we talk.
2. Coach the Skill: You do, I watch, we talk.
3. Fade out of the picture: You do, I watch and talk less and less.

We talk. If you were modelling, externally process the internal process. If you are coaching, have them tell you what they were thinking at each step. So much of the red letters in scripture are Jesus' commentary on something that just happened, often in response to a question.

Discipleship does not happen apart from church (God's people). Jesus didn't say, “Dispense information to the ends of the earth,” he said to make disciples of all people to the ends of the earth. Which means we can never be faithful but say, “Hey, don't look at me, I'm not perfect, just forgiven. Just follow Jesus, it's here in the book.” You HAVE to actually do what the book says, which is to say, “Follow me as I follow Christ.” If you feel inadequate, of course you do. That's normal. You don't have to have it all together before you start. But the best way to grow is to immediately begin teaching others what you have already learned.

In the world, whatever gets used gets dulled, dented, rusted, scratched. **In the kingdom**, whatever gets used gets polished, sharpened, renewed, and strengthened. What you keep, you lose. What you give away increases.

In the world, it's get all you can, lock it down to protect it. **In the kingdom** it's give it away because you can't lose treasure in heaven. You only lose what you keep for yourself. And it's more blessed to give than to receive.

Questions

- Has anyone disciplined you like Jim Bontrager did me?
- Is there someone who you wish would mentor you?
- Who are you investing in and sharing what you have learned so far?
- Have you experienced the protege effect, where you learn best when you have to teach someone else? When?
- Do you feel comfortable saying what Paul said, "Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ"? If not what areas need to change? Is repentance in order? Perhaps prayer for enabling grace?

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